

Birth Control Method Effectiveness Rates

Birth control method	Typical use success rate (%)	Perfect use success rate (%)
Abstinence	unknown	100
Implant (Norplant®, Implanon®)	99.95	99.95
Hormonal IUD (Mirena®)	99.9	99.9
Vasectomy (male sterilization)	99.85	99.9
Shot (Depo Provera®)	97	99.7
Pill (estrogen/progestin)	92	99.7
Mini-pill (progestin only)	92	99.7
Patch	92	99.7
Ring (Nuva Ring®)	92	99.7
Tubal Ligation (female sterilization)	99.5	99.5
Copper IUD (Copper-T®)	99.2	99.4
Lactational Amenorrhea Method	unknown	98.5 - 99.6*
Male condom (latex)	85	98
Withdrawal	73	96
Female condom	79	95
Diaphragm & spermicide	84	94
Fertility awareness	75	91 - 99**
Cervical cap & spermicide for a woman who has never been pregnant	84	91
Sponge for a woman who has never been pregnant	84	91
Spermicides (gel, foam, suppository, film)	71	82
Sponge for a woman who <i>has</i> been pregnant before	68	80
Cervical cap & spermicide for a woman who <i>has</i> been pregnant before	68	74
No protection	15	15***

Color codes for "perfect-use" success rates		
over 99%	Green	extremely effective
over 95%	Yellow	effective
over 90%	Orange	fairly effective
70-90%	Pink	least effective
15%	Red	very risky

Perfect use success rate is the highest amount of protection a person could expect from a birth control method. For the effectiveness to be this high, a couple would have to use their method correctly and consistently (e.g. taking every pill, using a condom every time, etc.)

Typical use success rate is the amount of protection a typical person could expect from a birth control method. It includes everyone who may have made birth control mistakes (e.g. missing pills, forgetting to put the next patch on in time) or didn't use their method every time (e.g. not using condoms every time they had sex).

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (Plan B)

In the first 24 hours after unprotected sex, Plan B is very effective and reduces the risk of pregnancy up to 95%.

It is also effective up to 5 days after sex, but should be taken **as soon as possible**. It becomes *much* less effective each day.

* Pregnancy rate is for first six months after childbirth; LAM is a short-term method of birth control.

The range of LAM rates reflect the findings of different studies.

** There are many different methods of using fertility awareness, with different levels of effectiveness.

*** In other words, if 100 couples use no protection for a year, 85 would get pregnant by the end of the year.

Source: Hatcher, Robert A., et al. (2005). Contraceptive Technology (18th Ed.) New York: Ardent Media